



Formerly Center for Public Policy Priorities

Please Support HB 886: Local Leaders Need the Authority to Address the Housing Needs of their Community

For more information, please contact Jonathan Lewis, Senior Policy Analyst
lewis@everytexan.org

Texans, like so many Americans across the country, are being faced with the significant challenge of establishing secure housing. An estimated 27,000 Texans are experiencing homelessness every day and an estimated 49 percent of Texans are cost burdened by housing, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. And while the housing challenges in Texas have been present for years, COVID-19 has only made matters worse. U.S. Census data shows that millions of Texans report already being behind on rent or mortgage payments or expect to be in the near future.

In response to the housing challenges faced by so many Texans in their communities and the lack of support from federal and state authorities, local elected officials have stepped up to address the housing needs of their community but are finding their hands tied by state interference in local affairs. Currently Texas state law prevents local communities from prohibiting discrimination based on source of income, implementing inclusionary zoning, and putting in place rent controls.

HB 866 removes state preemption of source of income discrimination laws; returning just one tool to address homelessness to local elected officials in Texas.

Local laws that protect families from discrimination based on their source of income can make it easier for families who receive federal assistance to find quality, stable affordable housing in communities that meet their needs. A study conducted in Fort Worth found that 78% of landlords refused to accept vouchers. In neighborhoods with poverty under 10%, the refusal rate jumped to 85%. Federal housing vouchers theoretically allow participants to move anywhere they find suitable housing – expanding their options beyond the historic, enduring concentration of subsidized housing. Discrimination against source of income prohibits families from making the choice to move into a community that better meets their needs.